

BLESSING

OF

PRIMITIVE

Counsellours

Discourfed in a

SERMON

By W. Shipps
Preached in the Audience of the GOVERNOUR, COUNCIL,
and REPRESENTATIVES, of the Province of the Massachusetts
Bay, in New-England. May 31st. 1693. Being the Day for the
ELECTION of Counsellours, in that Province.

By Increase Sather.

President of Harvard College in Cambridge, and Teacher of a
Church at Boston, in New-England.

Bene agere & Male audire Regium est

1867

BOSTON.

Printed and Sold, by Benjamin Harris, Over-against the
Old Meeting-House. 1693.

Donatus Auctor plurimum venerandi
1742.

THE GREAT

BLESSING

OF

PERMITIVE

Counsellors.

Discord is a

SEEK MON

and REPRESENTATIVE of the people of the United States in New York City, for the purpose of the

of the Senate of the United States

of the Senate of the United States

1857

and sold by the American Book Company of New York

TO THE

Inhabitants

OF the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay,
In

NEW ENGLAND.

THAT this Colony was happy as to Civil Government whilst they Enjoyed their *Former Charter*, is most certain. Not that that there were no imperfections attending that First Patent. Our Neighbours in the other Colonies saw that there were some material Defects therein, which are not in their Charters, that were Granted after *Ours*. But inasmuch as by Vertue thereof, the Freeman had full Power to Chuse their own Rulers, they could not be Miserable, unless by unhappy *Elections* they made themselves so.

That some great Priviledges contained in the *Old Charter*, are not in that which at Present we enjoy, is known to every one: Nevertheless there is that in it which calls for great Thankfulness to God, whose Providence has Smiled as well as Frowned upon us. By Vertue of this Charter every man is Confirmed in the Peaceable Enjoyment of his *Estate and Property*. Nor can any *Taxes* now be imposed on you, or *Laws* made, without your own consent by such *Representatives* as your selves shall Chuse. And (which is a greater matter) you are for ever delivered from all Impositions on *Conscience*, which not many years ago you were afraid of. You may serve God with all the *freedom* which your hearts can desire. Nor can there be any *Judge or Justice of Peace*, but such as the *Counsellors* who are to assist the Governour shall consent unto. Nor any *Counsellours* Confirmed, beside such as the *Representatives* of the Province shall Nominate to the Governour. *These* are things which if you slight or undervalue them, the Most High will doubtless be Offended. Nor is a *Murmuring Spirit* the right way to obtain more. When the Children of Israel Murmured against those

that had been the Instruments of their Salvation, what did they get by it ? For My own part, If I desire any thing in the World, I Wish your Prosperity, and that you were in a Frame fit for, and might enjoy all the Priviledges which your selves can Wish for, in Order to your own Happiness. And I thought I had given Demonstrations of my great affection to you, both whilst present with you, and absent from you : which notwithstanding some ill men (Who they are I know not) have caused reports to flye about the Country, as tho During my Negotiation for you in *England*, I never opened my mouth for the Vindication of *New England*, and never endeavoured the Restoration of ancient Priviledges, but in taking up with the present Charter (when more could not be obtained) followed my own Opinion without the advice of such as were your Friends ; and acted contrary to Instructions received from the General Court. But if I never did any thing for the Vindication of the People in this Province, from the Aspersions cast upon them by their Adversaries, I desire to know who it was that Published the *Narrative of the Miseries of New England*, and that afterwards wrote a *First, Second, and Third, Vindication of the People there* ? If I never endeavoured the Restoration of *Old Charter Priviledges*, by means of whose Solicitations was it, that Votes were passed in the *Honourable House of Commons*, that the *Old Charter* should be restored, and a *Bill* wherein the Judgment against that Charter was Reversed, a Copy whereof I can produce ? And who was it that wrote and dispersed, *Reasons for the Confirmation of that Charter* ? Or, that did oftentimes Humbly Address Their Majesties, and Their Principal Ministers of State concerning that affair ? Day and Night have seen, Heaven and Earth have heard, both Worlds are Witnelles, with what Importunities I have Solicited both God and Man, for all your ancient Priviledges, yea and for Additionals unto them, according to the Instructions which the General Court sent unto me, about my attendance to every one of which I gave to the General Assembly a Particular and Satisfactory account at my first Arrival.

That I did not take one step without the Advice of the Wisest and Best Friends which *New England* has in *England*; there are many in *London* can attest. My Worthy Dear Friend Mr. *Matthew Mead* in a Letter to a Relation of mine in *Boston*, is pleased thus to Write,

Mr. Mather, Has deserved highly of *New-England*, for the unsfainting Diligence and Indefatigable Endeavours he has shewed in his Agency for that People. And whilst some wish you may perhaps wonder that he has obtained no more, we here, who have the Advantage of a better Prospect, wonder that he has done so much. And if men Reward not his great work, and Labour of Love, I am sure God will. What he has done has not been without the Counsel and Advice of the best

best Friends that Country has in this, both Parliament Men, Lawyers and Ministers; and to be thankful for what you have for the present is the way to get what you want hereafter. These are the words of Mr. Mead. It were indeed improper for me to produce a tenth part of the Testimonies wherewith no inconsiderable persons have Spontaneously favoured and furnished me to Justify my integrity in this matter; nevertheless, the Injuries done me (which I cannot be so Stoical as not at all to resent) since my Return to New-England, make it but a reasonable piece of Justice to my self, to bring forth one or two more of them. Not only Mr. Mead, but many other Eminent Ministers, with whom I had the Happiness of a free Conversation in London, for the space of Three or Four Years, were so kind as to send a Letter to the General Court in Boston, Expressing their Approbation of my Proceedings. The Letter bears Date, October 17th. 1691. And is Subscribed by, Dr. Bates, Dr. Annesly, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Barker, Mr. Woodcock, Mr. Alsop, Mr. How, Mr. Mayo, and several Other Eminent Divines in that City. Modesty would restrain me from mentioning that respectful Character they are pleased to impose upon me, did not the Suggestions of some Whisperers necessitate thereunto, that so my Friends and Countrymen may be truly informed concerning my transactions in their behalf. Their words are as followeth.

We must give this true Testimony of Our much Esteemed and Beloved Brother Mr. Increase Mather, that with Inviolate Integrity, Excellent Prudence, and Unfainting Diligence, He has managed that great Business, committed to his trust. As He is Instructed in the School of Heaven to Minister in the affairs of the Soul, so He is furnished with a Talent to transact affairs of State. His Proceedings have been with that Caution and Circumspection as is Correspondent to the weight of His Commission. He with Courage and Constancy has pursued the Noble Scope of his Employment, and understanding the true moment of things has preferred the Publick Good to the vain conceits of some, that more might be obtained if Peremptorily insisted on. Considering the open opposition and secret arts that have been used to frustrate the best Endeavours for the Interest of New-England, the happy Issue of things is superior to our Expectations.

Your present Charter secures Liberty and Property, the fairest Flowers of the Civil State, and which is incomparably more valuable, it secures the enjoyment of the Blessed Gospel in its Purity and Freedom. Altho' there is a restraint of your Power in some things, that were Granted in the former Charter, yet there are more Ample Priviledges in other things that may be of Perpetual advantage to the Colony. We doubt not but your faithfull Agent will receive a Gracious Reward above; and we hope His successful Service will be welcomed with your entire approbation and grateful acceptance. Thus those Reverend and Learned Persons.

The *Whisperers* that have endeavoured to make people believe that the Ministers who Subscribed that Letter did afterwards repent of their so doing, are *Forgers of Lies*. Nor would those Worthy Persons account it any other then a *Calumny* to have such a thing said of them, Four or Five of them having since that, Written Letters to some in *Boston* of the same Import with the Former. And so have several Gentlemen in *London*, whose Sentiments and Expressions for the present I forbear to mention.

And whereas that Right Worshipful Gentleman, Sr. Henry Ashurst, with whom I had the Honour to be Joyned in the same Agency, in behalf of this Colony, and who did fully concur with Me in what was done for *New-England*, has bin unworthily reflected on by some *Male-Contents*; for His Vindication as well as My own, and that so the Inhabitants of this Province, both such as are now Living, and such as shall come hereafter, may see, to whom they have (under God) bin Beholden, for what Restored Liberties, and Confirmed Properties, they now do, and are like to possess; I Judge it proper and necessary to publish some passages in his Letter sent to the General Assembly at *Boston*. Dated December 28th. 1691. In which He thus Speaks.

I have not for above Twelve Months troubled you with any of my Letters, because I knew my Worthy Friend, Mr. Mather, did not omit any opportunity of acquainting you with every thing wherein your Interest was concerned. I shall not much enlarge upon the Services that Mr. Mather hath done, for you have His True Character sent you by the Reverend Dr. Bates, and other the most Eminent Ministers in and about this Town. But I am sure He has been Faithful to your Interests, and diligent, and unwearyed in your service, with neglect of his Health. He hath lived here for You, and deserveth the greatest Marks of your Favour you can bestow on him. Mr. Mather and My self in Transacting your affairs did not leave any way unattempted that the wisest Friends we could consult with, could direct us to. When the King was Petitioned to make alterations in your Settlement, and to appoint a Governour, and other General Officers, we then joyned all our interests together, and obtained the Naming of every one of them, and other Priviledges that are not granted to any other Plantation. None have been more industrious by all possible means then Mr. Mather, and My self to have obtained your Old Charter. I hope Mr. Mather will do me that justice, to assure you, that I have never omitted any opportunity of serving you to the utmost of my Power. Thus that Worthy Gentleman.

I must now do Him that Right He expects from Me, before all the World And as I have elsewhere said, I say again, it is not in the Power of *New-England* duely to Reward his Endeavours. But to requite him with Censures, will not be only *Vile Ingratitude* (the *Compendium* of all Evil) but great Folly
You

You cannot loose *His* Friendship alone: and who will ever make an Interest for you again, if He must be rewarded with *Slanders* for all His Care and Pains? By such things you may soon make yourselves *Friendless*, and the most miserable people in the World. Some Friends of mine in *England* who were very willing I should spend the remainder of My days amongst them, told me, that they had bin informed that the People of *New-England* were always *ungrateful to their Publick Servants*, & that altho' they knew I had with Industry & Fidelity served them to the utmost of my Capacity, they doubted, whether they would be sensible of it or no. My reply to them was, that (with the Divine Permission) I would go to *N. Engl.* & see, and if I found their prognostications true, I should see (the dear people in *Boston* concurring with me) my Call clear to return to *England* again. And now I cannot understand but that the Inhabitants of the Province do generally rejoyce in what they at present enjoy. And their Representatives did (the last year) not only thank me, but were so civil as to propose a *Reward* for the service I had done for them, which I was not free to except, being desirous to convince my Country that (as the Apostle said to his *Corinthians*) *I have sought them not theirs*. And that I expect my Reward in another World. Nevertheless inasmuch as there are *some* (a few are to many) ill Spirits who make it their design, by *Slanders* to disaffect others, I have complied with the advice of those who perswaded to the Publishing these things that so Credulous persons may not be imposed on by the invented stories of a few Whisperers. I Remember that at My departure from *London*, taking my leave of a Noble Personage, and Craving His Lordships Advice what might be said to satisfy the People of *New-England*, now they were deprived of so great a Priviledge as that of Chusing their own Governour, His Reply to Me was.

If they will be Dissatisfied, it is Impossible that they should be Dissatisfied at *You*, for Mankind knows that *You* did all that you could to obtain that and all other Priviledges which themselves can wish for. But were I in Your Case, at my Return to *New-England*, I would say to them, *Gentlemen, I have brought to You, the Best Charter I could get for you - 'Tis in Your Power, whether you will accept of it or no; If you like it not you may if you please send it back to the King, and send over a more Fortunate Agent!* And let them Try (said my Lord) whether they can find a man in all *New-England* that can get a better Charter for them, than you have obtained.

The true and plain State of the Case was this: The Colony lay a Bleeding for want of a Settlement as to Civil Government. The General Court had in an Adress to the King, signified, *That the former Governour and Assistants did not think it safe, to Enter on the full Exercise of their Old Charter Government, but did Accept of the Government for the present, until by direction from En-*

gland, *there should be an Orderly Settlement.* The Agents had no *Instruction*, from their Principals not to submit unto whatever Settlement should in *England* be concluded best for them. So that if they had refused what was offered, they could not have answered their so doing. It is an Old Proverb, *That half a Loaf is better than no Bread.* And I must confess I am not of their Opinion, who if they cannot have *every thing* they desire, they will have *nothing*, who prefer their *Late Bondage* to their *present Liberty*; who if they must have a Governour Set over them by the King, had rather have a *bad* than a *good* man for such Reasons as I am not willing to mention.

The Lord pardon their Folly. And O my Soul come not thou into their Secret, unto their Assembly be not thou United. If after I have done my utmost to Serve you, my Sollicitudes, and the Difficulties that I have gone thro' for your sakes, must have a Requital with that which is known in *New-England*, by the Infamous Name of *Country-Pay*, I trust the Grace of God will keep me from being too sensible of it. I am not Conscious to my self of any hurt or wrong I have done, unless four years hard Service, for the preservation of your Liberty and Property, and the procuring of Gifts for you, from Royal and from other Benefactors of greater value than all the Money I did in that Time Expend on your account, and all this without any the least Recompence be a wrong to you. *Forgive me that wrong.* You are at this day saved from Slavery and Ruine. Whoever has been the Instruments of obtaining such Mercy for you, certainly you will neither please God nor Honour *your selves* by abusing them. However you deal with *Me*, be not unkind to *others*, who have deserved well at your Hands. Neither Lessen *Divine* or *Royal* Favours bestowed on you. I pray God it may never be worse with you as to Civil Government then it is at present, and then you will be in that respect, as happy a people as any on the Face of the whole Earth at this Day.

If the Sermon herewith Emittid, cause Praises to that God who has Restored Counsellors as at the Beginning; & Prayers for the continuance of so great a Blessing; My Design in granting the Importunate Desires of many for its Publication, will be attained. The Lord has Tryed *New-England* with Signal Favours once more, having put them into the hands of Rulers that seek their VVelfare; and He waits to see whether they will be Thankful, and shew themselves fit for the continuance of so great a Blessing, but if instead of that fruit which he expects from such a people, there shall be found amongst them many Murmurers against God and his Servants, there is no reason to think otherwise, but that He will very speedily change the Tenour of his Dispensations towards us, which I Implore the Mercy of Heaven to prevent.

Primitive

PRIMITIVE
COUNSELLOURS.
A Great
BLESSING.

ISAIA. i. 26.

I will Restore thy Counsellours as at the Beginning.

WHEN *Austin* sent to *Ambrose*, craving his Advice what part of the Scripture he should especially Read, He Commended the Prophet *Isaiah* to him. He continued Prophefying a very long time; to be sure above Sixty (some think above Fourscore) years.

In his Publick Ministry, he never spared any unto whom he was sent to Deliver Messages in the Name of the Lord. His Style is not only Heroick and Majestical, becoming a Magnanimous Spirit, but very Evangelical. Whence some of the Ancients have called him *the Fifth Evangelist*, and the *Apostle of the Old Testament*. His Divine sayings (some or other of them) are Quoted no less than Sixty Times in the *New-Testament*. The usual Method observed by him in his Sermons, is with Awful Severity to threaten Judgments on the Impenitent, and to Predict and Promise mercy to the truly Penitent. And so He does in this Text and Context.

In the preceding Verse the Lord by the Prophet declares that the Judgments inflicted on his People should be Sanctified to their Reformation. He would Turn his Hand upon them, not in Wrath but in Mercy, so as purely to Purge away their Dross. This Verse is a farther Confirmation of

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that Prediction, wherein there are Two Great Blessings promised to *Jerusalem*.

1. That *Judges*, i. e. Chief Magistrates *should be Restored to them as at the first*.

This was necessary in Order to their being a Reformed People. For it was by means of the profaness of their Princes, that the City and Nation was corrupted. Nor could a National Reformation be expected until such time as the great ones therein should have their hearts sett for Religion, and Righteousness.

2. The Lord does here promise His People that they shall have *Counsellours as at the beginning*. For altho' the Chief Magistrate should be for Reformation and Holiness, if his *Counsellours* be not so too, little good can be expected, therefore both are promised as a Singular Favour of God unto *Jerusalem*. The Doctrine before us to be insisted on, as suitable to the present Occasion. Is,

That Primitive Counsellours are a singular Mercy and Blessing of God to His People.

The Doctrine may be Confirmed in Three Propositions.

Proposition. I. *Good Counsellours are the Gift of God.* The Lord saith here *I will Restore thy Judges and thy Counsellours*. It is not in the Power of all the men in the World to make a good Counsellour, except God first make him to be such an one. There are but few men in the World comparatively who are fit to give Counsel, especially in the difficult affairs of State. And they that are, it is God that has furnished them with gifts and Qualifications for such a station. *Who maketh thee to differ* (saith the Apostle) *and what hast thou that thou didst not Receive.* 1 Cor. 4. 7. Who is it that makes one man to be greater or better than another? To be Richer or Wiser than another. It is the Lord that makes it so. When *John Baptists* Disciples were troubled that another, (tho' infinitely his Superiour) was preferred before him, He said to them *A man can Receive nothing except it be given him from Heaven.* Joh. 3. 27. If a man has Reputation above another, he has Received it from Heaven, and if he has great accomplishments in more respect than one, he is beholden to Heaven for them all. It is said of Solomon, *That God gave him Wisdom and Understanding exceeding Much, and Largeness of Heart even as the Sand that is on the Sea shore*, because of the infinite number of Wise Conceptions that his Large soul was able to Comprehend. 1 King 4. 29. Royal Endowments were conferred on him, and it was God that did make him fit to be a King: so if any man has the understanding which is requisite in a Counsellour, it is God that has

has given him that Understanding. And it is His Providence that does order who shall be such. There are some in the World who are well accomplished to be in such a Capacity that are not made use of. There are that have this Preeminence belonging to them as their Birth-Right. Noble Men are *Consilarii Nati*. Others are Chosen and Constituted by the Supreme Power. In some Places the People have a Concurrence in the Election of Counsellours. This notwithstanding, the God of Heaven determines and over-rules all. Whoever may have an hand in the Choice, their Spirits and all their Actions are disposed of by an Invisible Power. *The Lot is cast into the Lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* Pro. 16. 33.

Moreover when any persons are qualified for, and chosen unto a Service of this Nature, it is God that does incline their hearts to accept of that Trouble. Indeed the Generality of men (and especially such as are unfit) need no great perswasion to comply with such Offers. But there are some who are as averse to Publick Employments as was *Moses*, when he said *Send I pray thee by the Hand of whom thou wilt send, only let me be excused.* I have had the happiness to be acquainted with a Great and Noble Personage, who was desired by Two Kings successively to be of Their Council, but declined it. The affairs of a People may be so Perplexed, as that a wise Man may be afraid to meddle, or to be any way interested in their Publick concerns. This we see in what the Prophet Speaks, *Isai. 3. 6, 7. Be thou our Ruler, and let this Ruine be under thy Hand, I will not be an Healer, Make me not a Ruler of the People.* I see (saith He) you are a Ruined People, and I have no mind that your Ruin should be under my Hand, therefore I will not accept of your offer. Counsellours (such as are so by their place and office) do Assist in Government. Now the Work of Government is no easy Labour. That Celebrated saying of *Melancthon* has a great deal of Truth in it, that there are there hard Labours *Parturientis* the Labour of Child Birth, *Docentis*, the Labour of one that is a Teacher, *Regentis*, the Labour of one that is a Ruler. They that never did, & were never fit to make trial of it, may think it easy, but others do not find it so. One of the Kings of England had in all the Windows of his House a Crown in a Bush of Thorns, to signify what Cares do attend Government. If then Wise men shall be willing to deny themselves as to their own repose, and to encounter with many difficulties in serving the Publick Interest, it is God that has made them so.

Proposition II. Primitive Counsellours are men of singular Qualifications. The Scripture mentions especially four Graces which Rulers and Counsellours should be adorned with: And they which have them being qualified according

Primitive Counsellours

according to that Rule which is from the Beginning, are Primitive Counsellours.

The first is *Piety towards God*. Counsellours ought to be, and Counsellours at the Beginning were Godly men. So it was when the Children of Israel first began to be a Common-wealth under Moses; and at their Beginning to be a Settled Kingdom under David. The Judges who were Governours, were Godly, and some of the Kings of Israel were Holy men, and then we may be sure their Counsellours were so too. *Psal. 4.3. The Lord hath set apart him that is Godly for Himself.* This was spoken concerning David's being set apart to be the chief Ruler over the People of God; so they that are set apart to assist him whom God has made Ruler and Governour in Chief ought to be Godly. The first Counsellor of State that we read of in the Scripture was *Jethro*, a very pious person. He advised Moses to chuse some to assist him in Government, and sheweth how they should be qualified. *Provide* (saith he) *such as Fear God.* *Exod. 18. 21.* such as will by their Authority and Example Encourage others to Fear and Serve Him. That will make the Advancement of Gods Interest their chief Design. That will so act & so speak as men that really believe they must give an Account to the Great and Eternal God. That will often think with themselves, is this Council according to the approving Will of God, and that will not for the World advise to any thing which they believe is contrary thereunto.

2. *Fidelity towards men* is another requisite in a Counsellor. A Primitive Counsellor is qualified with Righteousness as well as Piety. Choose men of Truth said *Jethro*. Counsellors are Rulers. Now he that Ruleth over men must be just, *Ruling in the Fear of God*, *2 Sam. 23. 3.* They ought to be men, that will give to God the things that are Gods, and to Caesar, the things that are Caesars; yea, that will give to all men their due. Counsellors ought to be, and Counsellors at the Beginning were, Faithful to him that is the Chief Ruler, in advising him for the best: Such an one was *Hushai* the Archite unto David, *2 Sam. 17. 15.* Thus and thus did *Ahitophel* Counsel, and thus and thus have I Counsell'd. He Saved the Life of his Prince by giving that Counsel. Men in such a Station should moreover approve themselves faithful to the Interest of the People, whose Welfare as Counsellors they are bound to endeavour. The Prince and the People have not opposite Interests, He that promotes the true Interest of the one, does so of the other also. A great Emperour was wont to say, *Non mihi sed populo*; I am Set in this High Station, not for my self, but for the Nations sake. So are Counsellors to advise unto such things as the People, the Country who are Concerned in them, may have cause to Bless God for them. Such a Counsellor was *Mordecai* in the Court of Persia. *Esth. 10. 3.* *Mordecai* the Jew was next unto King *Ahasuerus*; He was Advanced to be a Right Honourable Privy Counsellor,

seller, Seeking the Wealth of his People. It was said of one of the Kings of France, that He was, *Titularis non tutularis Rex, defuit non præsuit Reipublicæ*. So may it be said of such Counsellors as do not intend and faithfully design the Good of that people, over whom the Providence of God has placed them, they have only the Name, but not the nature of Counsellors in them. True Primitive Counsellors they are not.

3. It is necessary that Counsellors should be Endued with the Grace of Courage. The Spirit of Counsel and of Might, that is to say of Courage, are conjoyned together. Counsellors should be men of Courage, *Isa. 11. 2.* And this is implied in that of their Fear of God, *b. e.* they must Fear God and not men. *Isa. 33. 22.* The Spirit of Courage was given to whom he did Commission to be Judges, *Isa. 33. 22.* The Spirit of Courage was given to the Face of man. The like is to be said unto Counsellors. Solomon's Throne was supported by Lions, *2 King. 10. 20.* True Counsellors who are the Supporters of the Government should be of Magnanimous and Undaunted Spirits. The Pillars of a Land must not Warp either for fear or favour. They may not Fear the Frowns of them that are above them, so as to neglect their Duty. If they should see the Chief Ruler in danger of falling into any Error, which would be injurious to Himself or to his People; they ought freely tho' humbly to advise Him to witte. It is reported concerning the Chines, that the Counsellors of their Emperors do with great Freedom admonish him of dangerous Errors, and that they do it with a confidence accounted worthy of the Name of Counsellors, or men of Honour. *Joab* did the part of a Faithful Counsellor unto *David*, in dissuading from his ambitious Design of Numbring the People: *Why (said he) does my Lord the King require this? Why will he be a cause of Trespass unto Israel. 1 Chron. 21. 3.* And at another time, when *David* was too much Transported with passion at the Death of his Son *Abson*, *Joab* advised him to refrain himself, and to speak kindly to the men that had Hazarded their Lives to Save his; and *David* had the Wisdom to Harken to that good Advice. Nor should Counsellors in the Discharge of their Duty, be afraid of the Multitude. *Job* saith, *Did I fear a great Multitude? or did the Contempt of Families terrify me. Job 31. 34.* He knew that if he did punish Vice, the Families and Relations of such as had suffered the Law, would reproach him, and a multitude would clamour against him, but that would not deter him from a Faithful Discharge of the Duty of his Place; such Courage becomes a Counsellor. Let a man give the best Counsel in the World, he shall never please every body: There is such variety and Contrariety in the Opinions of men, that all cannot be pleased; sometimes not a few only, but the major part, take in with the wrong side, and have their unreasonable Dissatisfactions; now Counsellors

must do their Duty, let the World be pleased or displeased. They may not at any time be afraid to own Christ and his Cause, but if they see Designs on foot against the best Interest, they ought boldly to interpose, and to oppose themselves. It is said of *Joseph of Arimathea*, that he was an *Honourable Counsellor*, Mark 15. 43 some think that he was one of the *Sanhedrim*, the great Council of the Nation. Others suppose him to be one of the Governours Council. Now when there was a *Consult* about putting Christ to Death, this *Joseph* Entered his *Dissent*, and after the Lord was by Forms of Law, and false Witnesses, and an Accusation of pretended Treason, Condemned and Murdered, this *Honourable Counsellor*, went boldly unto *Pilate* who had received a Commission to be Governour over the Province of *Judea*, and *Craved the Body of Jesus*. Thus did He with Exemplary Courage own Christ and his Cause.

And yet more than all this is required in a Counsellor. A man may be a Pious, a Faithful, a Courageous man, and for all that not fit to be a Counsellor. Therefore 4. *It is necessary that a Counsellor be qualified with the Grace of Wisdom*. The Divine Wisdom is expressed by that of being *Great in Counsel*. Jer. 32. 19. Only God, Angels, and men are Causes by Counsel. The more Wisdom there is in any man, the more able he is to give Counsel: It is noted concerning that Faithful Minister of God, *Zachariah*, who was (as Interpreters have noted) an *Ecclesiastical Counsellor*, one with whom the King was wont to advise in matters of Religion, that He was a *wise Counsellor*, 1 Chron. 26. 14. So should all Counsellors be men of Wisdom. Hence 'tis said by the Prophet, Jer. 49. 7. *Is Wisdom no more in Teman? Is Counsel perished from the Prudent? is their Wisdom vanished*. Imprudent men are unfit to be made Counsellors. *Pharaohs* Counsellors of Old were wise men, but his Chief Counsellor *Joseph* (tho' a young man did Excel them all in Wisdom. *Pharaoh* said to him, *There is none so discreet and wise as thou art*. Gen. 41. 37. And the Psalmist saith of him, that He Taught *Pharaohs Senators* (his Counsellors) *Wisdom*. Psal. 105. 22. Courage without Wisdom, in one that undertakes to be a Counsellor, will do more hurt than good. An Horse that is full of Metal, if he has no Eyes to see his way before him, is a dangerous Creature to make use of. If rash, heady, unthinking men are made use of for Counsellors, the Publick Weal of such a People is in danger. The carnal Jews indeed depended too much on this that they had Wise men at Helm to be their Counsellors of State. Jer. 18. 18. *The Law shall not perish from the Priests, nor Counsel from the Wise*. We have wiser men than *Jeremy* (say they) to Sit in Council, and therefore what He adviseth unto is not to be regarded; but tho' a Nation whose Counsellors are great Politicians may possibly be ruined (as the Jewish Nation

Nation was) if they have not such Counsellors, they are in an ill case, as we shall have occasion anon further to declare.

Proposition III. *Such Counsellors as these described are a singular mercy and Blessing of God to a People.* I shall only mention two things that Evince the Truth of this Proposition.

1. *Civil Government is a great and necessary Blessing.* Without it the World would soon be Dissolved, and run into Confusion. As one speaks, the World would not then be a KOSMOS, a Beautiful Structure, but a KAOS, an horrid Heap of Disorder. What would Kingdoms be were it not for Government? but (as *Austin* expresses it) *Magna Latrocinia*, great Dens of Thieves. Let a people that have found the benefit of Government be without it for a while, and they will quickly be made sensible that 'tis a great and a necessary Blessing. I have read that it was once a Law amongst the *Perians*, that after the Death of their King, every man should have Liberty to do what he pleased for five days; and in these five days time there was such horrid doings, that all the people prized Government the better all their days after. Now Government cannot well be managed by one alone without the Assistance of Counsellors. Many Eyes see more than one. 'Tis possible that one man may discern that which another does not see. Besides, the Burden will be too heavy for one alone. Hence *Moses* said to the Children of *Israel*, *I am not able to bear you my self alone.* *Deut.* 1. 9. and again verse 12. *How can I my self alone bear your Cumbrances, and your Burdens, and your Strife?* Where there is a great people, the Burden is too heavy for a mortal man, tho' never so wise and able. *Moses* was a wise States-man, nevertheless *Jethro* advised him to take some to assist him, in Ruling that numerous people, because else the Burden would be so heavy upon him, as that he must needs sink and break under the weight of it. *Exod.* 18. 18. The wisest Ruler in the World needs the assistance of Counsellors. *Solomon* (the wisest of men) had his Counsellors about him. The truth is, the Light of Nature has taught men not only to Erect Governments, but that there should be Counsellors to assist the Chief Ruler. The Scripture informs us that not only the Kings of *Israel*, but the Kings of the Gentiles had their Counsellors, with whom they were wont to take Advice in all arduous Affairs. *Ezra* Blesseth God, who had extended Mercy to him before *Artaxarxes* the King of *Persia*, and his Counsellors. *Ezra* 7. 28. And in the 14. verse *He was sent of the King, and his seven Counsellors* Perhaps there might be Superstition in their fixing on the Number seven, if they did it (as some Learned Men suppose) because they would have their Government to Resemble the Heavens, wherein there are seven Planets: But as to the thing, that there

should be *Counsellors*, the Light of Nature instructed them; and therefore it is so in all Nations and Governments.

2. *The Interest and Influence of good Counsellors is great.* They have a great Interest in the Chief Ruler. In Governments, which are more absolute, and much more in those that are more Limited it is so, especially where the principal Ruler cannot Act without their Consent. It cannot be expressed of how great Concernment it is for such a People to be Blessed with Counsellors *as at the Beginning*. Not only whole *Provinces* but whole *Kingdoms* have Fared the better for the *Wise Counsellors* of one Good man. So did *Egypt*, because there was such a wise Counsellor as *Joseph* found amongst them. And the whole *Kingdom of Israel* found the benefit of it, when *David* made the Prophet *Nathan* to be of his Cabinet Council. *Solomon* Owed his Crown, and the People much of their Happiness to the seasonable Advice of *Nathan*, which had a great influence on the Royal Heart of King *David*, in causing him to Nominate *Solomon* to Succeed in Government, whereby great Confusions that otherwise would have happened, were prevented. *Rehoboam* had not lost ten parts in twelve of his Kingdom, if he had followed the wise Advice of his Fathers Counsellors. Nor had *Zadekiab* Lost his Kingdom, nor had the City and Temple been Burnt, and the whole Land made Desolate, if the good Counsellor of the Prophet *Jeremiah* had been hearkened unto, whom God sent to be a Counsellor to them. *If I give thee Counsel* (said the Prophet to the King) *wilt thou not hearken unto me.* Jer. 35. 15. It had been well if he had.

When there are *Counsellors as at the Beginning*, two things usually follow, which make a people happy.

1. *There will be good Judges.* Much of the Welfare of a People does consist in their having Able and Upright Judges, that will endeavour to approve themselves in all things like unto God, the Judge of Judges, with whom there is no Iniquity, nor Respect of persons. Hence *Moses* who Loved the Lords People in the Wilderness more than He Loved his own Life, out of Respect to their Welfare took of the Chief of the Tribes, Wise Men, and Known, and gave them a Commission and Instruction, to Act as Judges, solemnly charging them to acquit themselves as became men in their places. Deut. 1. 15, 16, 16. Now if there be Counsellors as at the Beginning, there will be Judges as at the First. It cannot but be so in a Government, where no Judges are appointed but with the consent of the Council. Good Counsellors will Advise to good Judges, and good Judges will make the Land happy.

2. *Where there are good Counsellours, Religion and Reformation will be Encouraged.* Primitive Counsellors will concern themselves to uphold Religion in the Truth, Purity and Power of it. In King Joash his Time, as long as Jehoadab was his Chief Counsellor, *The Service of the House of the Lord* was duly attended, but when ill Counsellors succeeded and were hearkened unto, *they Left the House of the Lord God of their Fathers, and Served Groves and Idols.* There is no great fear or danger of Apostasy in Matters of Religion, as long as there are Counsellors as at the Beginning. It is in their Power to prevent it, and they will prevent it. For a people to Enjoy the only true Religion; to have not only Liberty, but Encouragement to Serve God in the way and after the manner which Himself in His Holy Word has Appointed, is a mercy beyond Expression great. And thus it will be as long as there are such Counsellors as I am speaking of. Reformers are great Blessings to the places where they Live: Primitive Counsellors are of a Reforming Spirit. The Work of Reformation useth to go forward, when such are in Place. Besides Scripture Examples, we have seen it in our own Nation. In the Reign of King Henry 8. When he had such Counsellors as Cromwel and Cramner, there was in some things a great Reformation. And in several Reigns since that: Wise Counsellors have made our Nation happy, and as to many particulars more Reformed than once it was. There is a Glorious Day a coming, (and I trust in Christ that it is not far off) when the Church of God throughout the whole World, will be in a more Reformed State than ever yet was known since the World began, *When Judges as at the First, and Counsellors as at the Beginning,* will be the Instruments in the Hands of Christ, by whom it shall be effected. Wherefore in the next words to my Text, it is said, *afterwards thou shalt be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City.* Jerusalem the Church of God all the World over shall become a City of Righteousness, but first, and that it may be so, Primitive Counsellors shall be Restored.

We come now to make some Application of the Doctrine thus far Insisted on.

USE I.

Hence the contrary unto this of a Peoples being Blessed with Primitive Counsellors is a sore Judgment. It is said that *where no Counsel is, the People fall, but in the multitude of Counsellors there is safety.* Prov. 11. 14. Where there are good Counsellors, and a multitude of them, we may expect good, and much good, a multitude of Blessings will be on such a People, but where there are none such, nothing but ruine can be hoped for.

for. The Removal of wise Counsellors is threatened as a sore Judgment. *Isai. 3. 3.* When a People is reduced unto that condition, that there are none fit for Counsellors to be found amongst them, their State is deplorable, they are either perfectly undone, or the next door to ruin. *Mic. 4. 9.* *Why dost thou cry aloud, is the Counsellor perished?* There is cause enough to cry aloud if it be so. They may well make Loud Outcries of their being an undone people amongst whom the Counsellor is perished. And thus it is where there are Counsellors of pernicious principles and inclinations. Such an one there was in *Nineveh*, where the King of *Assyria* kept his Court. *Neh. 1. 11.* *There is one come out of thee that imagineth Evil against the Lord, a wicked Counsellor.* Perhaps *Rabshakeb* might be the Counsellor whom the Prophet there reflects upon. However, one he was that advised the King to Persecute the People of God, and to Act Arbitrarily, without any respect to right or wrong. Such Counsellors there were in *Persia*, who perswaded the Emperour to Establish Iniquity by a Law, and then to Persecute and Murder all such as could not with a good Conscience Conform to that Law. *Dan. 6. 7.*

Politicians have laid it down for a Maxim, and there is a Truth in it, *That a People had better have a bad Prince with a good Council, than a good Prince with a bad Council.* For Evil Counsellors will (as one expresseth it) *by their poysonous Whispers and Instillations at the Ear, Corrupt the Heart, & Taint the Spirits of the best Princes.* Kings and Kingdoms have often been Ruined by Evil Counsils. So was King *Abaziah*, who would needs take some of the House of *Abah* to be of his Council, and it is noted, that *they were his Counsellors to his Destruction.* *2 Chron. 22. 4.* The Kingdom of *Israel* was divided and so weakened after the Death of *Salomon*, and unhappy Counsellors were the cause of it. And thus it has been in our Nation. Not only in former Times, but in our Days. How came the late Abdicated King to be Deposed from his Kingly Throne, and his Glory to be taken from him; but because instead of hearkening to Counsellors as at the Beginning, he would be Governed by Popish Counsils.

U S E II.

This Informs and Directs them in whose power it is to Choose Counsellors what manner of persons they are to Elect, namely such as were at the Beginning. The VVord of the Lord does Instruct this General Assembly, whom they ought to Chose or Confirm this Day. What manner of persons the Representatives of this people, who are here before the Lord ought to Nominate, and what manner of Persons the Governour of this Province is by the VVord of the Lord, obliged to approve of. Unto you that are by the severall Towns throughout this Government Deputed to Act

in their stead. Let me say you have heard from the Word of the Lord, what kind of men Primitive Counsellors were, viz. God-fearing men, faithful, courageous, prudent, you have by the Royal Charter Granted to you Power to Nominate such, and you will please God in so doing. And let me further add here, that it is very meet that persons Nominated for Counsellors should be men of Estate, and of some Port in the VWorld. Isa. 3. 7. Thou hast Cloathing be thou our Ruler. Thou hast an Estate to Support the place and Dignity of a Ruler, and therefore we Choose thee. If this be not considered, Government will be rendred contemptible, and that cannot be without Sin. Let me also say to you who are the Representatives of this People, that it will not be prudence in you (at this time especially) to propose such Assistants to the Governour as you cannot but know that He cannot Accept of, and so to necessitate him to make use of his Negative Voice, when He has no desire to do it. And you cannot but know that whoever is Governour, He will judge it necessary that many of his Council should have their Habitations near to his, that so if any sudden Emergency or Danger to the Publick should happen, his Council may be at Hand to Advise with. And you cannot but know that no Governour will take those into his Council, who are Malecontents, and do what in them is to make others to be Dissatisfied to the Government. No Governour can take such men into his Bosome.

And as for your self Excellent Sir, whom God has made the Captain over his People in this VVilderness, It is a very great Power which the Divine Providence has put into your Hands, that you should have a Negative on the Elections of this Day. A Power which I confess, neither you nor any one else should have had, if any Interest that I was capable to make, could have prevented it. You know Sir, that I humbly argued against it to the Kings Majesty, and to many of His chief Ministers of State. But I now see that God has ordered it to be as it is in Mercy to this his People; what it may be for the future, when the Ingratitude of an unthankful Murmuring Generation of men, shall have provoked the Most High again to say of New England, her Enemies shall prosper, and her Adversaries shall be Chief, the Lord knoweth: but at present there is more good than hurt in it, and will be so as long as there shall be a Governour whose Heart is Engaged to seek not Himself, but the Publick good. You have, Sir, at this day good men, and some of them as wise men as any this Country does afford to be of your Council. And not one of them can be Removed without Your consent, since the present Counsellors must continue until new Ones are Chosen, and no Election of a New One is valid without your Approbation signified under Your Hand. And altho' it is necessary that some New Ones be Elected, and perhaps

convenient that there be some further Alterations, nevertheless, no one that is Disaffected to the best and highest Interest, or, to the Government of Their Majesties in England, or, that is an Enemy to the Government here, can be imposed on you. So that it is in your power to make this People happy one year longer. And I earnestly pray to God to incline your Heart to do what shall be pleasing in his sight, and most conducing to the Welfare of His People.

USE III.

I Conclude, With a Word of Exhortation which Concerns us all.

Let us do what in us lieth that this so great a Mercy may be continued to us.

We Read in the Gospel, that when the Lord Jesus Christ had taken a Text out of the Prophet *Isaiah*, He began His Sermon with saying, *This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears. Luk. 4. 21.* So let me conclude my Discourse with saying, This day, is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears, and before your eyes. For God has not only Given but Restored to *New-England*, Counsellours as at the Beginning. We are all greatly concerned to endeavour the Continuance of such a Favour.

You will say, *What shall we do that it may be so?*

Ans. 1. Let us be careful that those sins which provoke the Lord to withhold this Mercy from his People be not found amongst us. It is sin that does provoke God to take away Good Rulers, and to send Bad ones. It is Storie that when a very Unworthy Person was Advanced to an High Station, a Religious Man Expostulating with Heaven about it, Received that Answer, that it was not because such an one was Worthy of that Place, but because that sinful people were worthy to be Punished with having so wicked a Ruler set over them. It was Certainly a True Confession which the *Levites* made on a Publick Fast Day. *Neh. 9. 37. The Kings whom thou hast set over us because of our Sins, have dominion over our Bodys, and over our Cattel, at their pleasure.* They once had Merciful Rulers, and those too from amongst themselves, but they sinned them away, and were for a time in the hands of Strangers who did exercise an Arbitrary Power over them, so that they could not say that their Cattle, or their Lands, or anything was their own: all was at the Will and Pleasure of Strangers. *New-England* has had some experience of this. *Your Land Strangers did devour it in your presence.* You must give what they pleased to demand that so you might have a pretended Confirmation of your Estates and Properties.

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The Counsellours which then carried all were not Counsellours as at the beginning. God has Mercifully delivered you from them. But if the sins which brought that Judgment on the Land are still amongst us unreformed and unrepented of; what can be expected, but that after a clear Sunshine for a while the Clouds will return again with greater Darknes than ever? What those sins were I need not say, so much having been spoken concerning that, many Years ago. To be sure the great sin of this Generation is their forgetting the Errand on which their Fathers came into this Wilderness which was not to seek great things for themselves, but to seek the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. Let this people recover their Primitive Holiness, and they need not doubt but God will Bless them with Primitive Counsellours; and that they shall see that promise made to Jacob fulfilled, Jer. 30. 8. *Strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.*

2. *Let us be very thankful for what we enjoy.* To be thankful for Mercys, is the way to have them continued. What would not New-England have given no longer since then Five Years ago, to have been sure of what they now enjoy? And what, tho' you have not some Great Priviledges which once you had, and which should have been Restored to you, if He that speaketh to you this Day, could have obtained them for you, tho' it be with the Expence of his own Life, and of all that is Dear to him in this World will you be thankful for nothing: because you have not every thing just as you would have? Do any of you say, *all that you have is nothing?* I hear there are some (tho' not many) that say so. Let me Reason with you before the Lord this Day? You have by the Royal Charter granted to you, Property confirmed, so that every Man may sit under his *own Vine*, and his *own Figtree*. And is this nothing. I am sure you would have thought it something, and a great thing too, but a Few years since. You have all English Liberties Restored to you, so that a Governour with a *Juncto* of his Council cannot (as of late they did) make Laws, and imple Taxes on you, without your own consent, by your Representatives, And is this nothing? No Governour can now cause you, or your Children or Servants (as not long since they might) to be sent out of the Province. Your Present Charter Secures you against all such Invasions. And do you now account it nothing? You have Peculiar Charter-Priviledges granted to you, which no other English Plantation in the World has. Witness your being here this Day. No other Plantation has that Priviledge of Nominating to the Governour, his Council: nor have the Kings Subjects in England it self that Priviledge; and is this nothing? Your Religion is secured to you. Now you need not fear being sent to Prison (as some
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of you were under a late Government) because you scruple Swearing by a Book. You may Worship God in the greatest Purity, and no one may Disturb you. If you set apart Daies for Solemn Praier or Praises, as the Divine Providence may call thereunto, you need not fear being interrupted or Obstructed therein as it was here six year ago. You may by Laws not only Protect, but encourage that Religion which is the General Profession of the Country. And is all this nothing? You have at present a Governour, and a Lieutenent Governour, (and all the Council likewise) from amongst yourselves, who do unfeignedly seek your welfare. And is this nothing? Some of you say it will not be long thus. In which you speak more then you know. But Suppose so. *Extra* and the Lords People with him, thought they had great cause to be thankful to God in that He had given them a Little reviving in their Bondage, and extended mercy to them in the sight of the King of Persia, who had by a Charter granted them Liberty to set up the House of God, and to repair the Desolations thereof, as we may do this Day. But if a Change come, and the Lord be Provoked again to set Rulers over you that will obstruct what is Good and desirable, you that are the *Murmurers* will be found the Guilty cause of it before the Lord, in the Name of the Lord be it spoken to you.

3. *Prayer unto God may be a mean to obtain the Continuance of this so great mercy.* Be Earnest with God that you may still have Counsellours as at the Beginning. And you are on this (as well as on many other) accounts Concerned to pray for the King and Queen; For as long as Their present Majesties shall hold the *English* Scepter in their Hands, we in *New-England* may hope to see Good days. God has Blessed Our Nation with a King in the Preservation of whom the Fate of *Europe* and of the Church of God is more concerned then it has been in the life of any one Person for these Thousand Years. A King that Fights the Battels of the Lord. A King that when a Crown was offered to him, declared, that nothing should Oblige him to be a Persecuter. VVho that has a Spark of Grace in his Heart, will not pray for such a King? A King that has more then once or twice in My hearing and to me expressed a singular respect to His Good Subjects in these Colonies.

And Pray for the Queen.

For God has blessed the Nation with a Queen (as well as with a King) the like unto whom (without Reflection on any Predecessors) never sat on the *English* Throne. A Queen that loveth all people that are good, whatever their perswasions in matters relating to Conscience may be. A Queen that is a pattern of Vertue to the Nation. A Queen that has
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(to my certain knowledge) interceded with the King, that He would be kind to *New-England*. Pray then for the Life and Prosperity of such a King and such a Queen. And I do the rather urge this upon you, because I have sometimes been favoured with the Liberty humbly to assure Their Majesties, that there are none in the World that Pray for them with more fervency and frequency than do Their Subjects in *New-England*. I beseech you make it appear that I was not mistaken in what I have affirmed concerning you.

And pray for them that shall be *Established* as *Counsellors* and Rulers over you this Day: That the Lord Jesus whose Name is *Counsellor*, will be with them: That the Lord Jesus who saith, *Counsel is mine and sound Wisdom*, will please to give them of his Spirit, which is the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, *the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord.*

FINIS.

